

WASHINGTON, DC—U.S. Congressman Peter DeFazio responded last night to President Obama's State of the Union address. Following are DeFazio's remarks:

"I am happy that the President is finally supporting the position I took over a year ago to make Wall Street pay for their own bailout. I was also happy to see that he is finally paying attention to the historic unemployment we are currently suffering. It is about time that he turn his attention to the creation of jobs, especially utilizing the engine of growth in the United States—small businesses.

Unfortunately, he failed to give specifics on federal transportation infrastructure investment. This investment is a proven way to create well-paying family wage jobs. I voted against the stimulus package because it failed to invest sufficient funds into infrastructure. Only seven percent of the money in the Recovery Act went to infrastructure, but that small seven percent is responsible for 25 percent of the job created or sustained. That's why I am pushing for passage this year of the long-term surface transportation authorization legislation which will create jobs and improve our long-term economic viability.

In order to create jobs we need to also fix our broken trade policies. A nation that has exported its manufacturing base and makes little of what it consumes jeopardizes its standing in the world. If we continue to export skilled jobs, the middle class will continue to shrink. It is not clear from President Obama's remarks tonight that he is willing to break with the failed trade policies of the past.

Ignoring our nation's drastic trade imbalance hinders job growth and hurts working families.

Obama's remarks on education were promising. Additionally tuition assistance and Pell Grants for students and working families will make us more competitive in the global economy and help ensure the success of the next generation of Americans.

I was pleased he made a commitment to eliminating unnecessary spending in our government. His proposal to examine each agency budget line by line and cut wasteful spending is desperately needed.

I was encouraged he recognized the corrosive power that the recent decision by the activist Supreme Court is going to have on our ability to have fair elections. This decision overturns more than one hundred years of election reform and judicial precedent, and will allow massive amounts of corporate and foreign money to pour into our electoral system. I will work with my colleagues to mitigate this obvious over-reach by the Roberts' Court.

Sadly, I was disappointed by President Obama's lack of specifics on health care reform. There are bipartisan, concrete steps we can, and must take, to make health care more affordable. He failed to address these solutions in his address tonight."

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